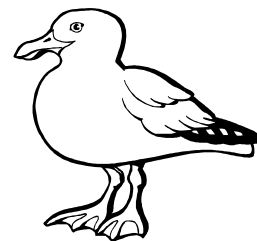


Providing protection to the people, property, natural resources and wildlife of the coastal area requires a state of constant readiness.

A newsletter of the NHDES Oil Spill Protection Program

The Responder



Summer 2001

WELCOME!

Welcome to the first issue of *The Responder*, providing information about emergency response preparedness for possible oil spills in New Hampshire's coastal region. About 700 million gallons of fuel are delivered to five oil terminals on the Piscataqua River. The largest spill occurred in 1969 when 200,000 gallons of home heating oil was released

Topics covered in this and future issues will include: the latest technology used in emergency responses; current plans and approaches to tackling petroleum spills; who's who in coastal response contacts; and upcoming training and other events.

The N.H. Department of Environmental Services (DES), working with others in the Piscataqua River Cooperative, maintains an active Oil Spill Response Program, and *The Responder* serves as one means to inform the public of steps being taken to protect one of New England's outstanding natural resources – the Piscataqua River, the Great Bay Estuary, and New Hampshire's Atlantic coast.

For more information, please contact DES's Oil Spill Initial Response Program at (603) 271-8807 or its Portsmouth Command Center at (603) 430-6854.

Piscataqua River Estuary Requires Special Diligence *River Cooperative Stays Prepared*

With some of the swiftest flowing tidal currents in the nation, Portsmouth Harbor, served by the winding, island-filled Piscataqua River, requires careful navigation by ocean-going vessels. This complex estuarine system, which also includes Great Bay,

one of New Hampshire's most biologically rich ecosystems, also requires constant vigilance and preparedness by emergency oil spill responders. Fortunately, the Piscataqua



To protect the area's sensitive ecosystem, ocean-going vessels, particularly the many oil tankers that use Portsmouth Harbor, must take special care while navigating the swift tidal currents of the Piscataqua River.

River Cooperative serves this need well. Through its continual planning, training exercises, and equipment preparation, the Cooperative brings a

COOPERATIVE, continued on page 2

Protecting the Piscataqua River and Great Bay Estuary *Oil Spill Equipment Deployment Exercises*

Every spring and fall, people in the Portsmouth Harbor and Great Bay areas may notice the deployment of a flotilla of response boats, barges, skimmers, and bright orange oil spill containment and deflection boom on the river. What they are seeing is the Piscataqua River Cooperative (PRC) practicing and developing skills to effectively respond to an actual oil spill. The PRC is a non-profit organization consisting of oil terminal members located on the river. (For a listing of its members, see article above.)



Deploying the "Bay Defender" at Spruce Creek, Kittery, Maine.

This spring's equipment deployment exercise took place on May 24.

EXERCISES, continued on page 2

The Piscataqua River, Great Bay Estuary, and Atlantic Coast

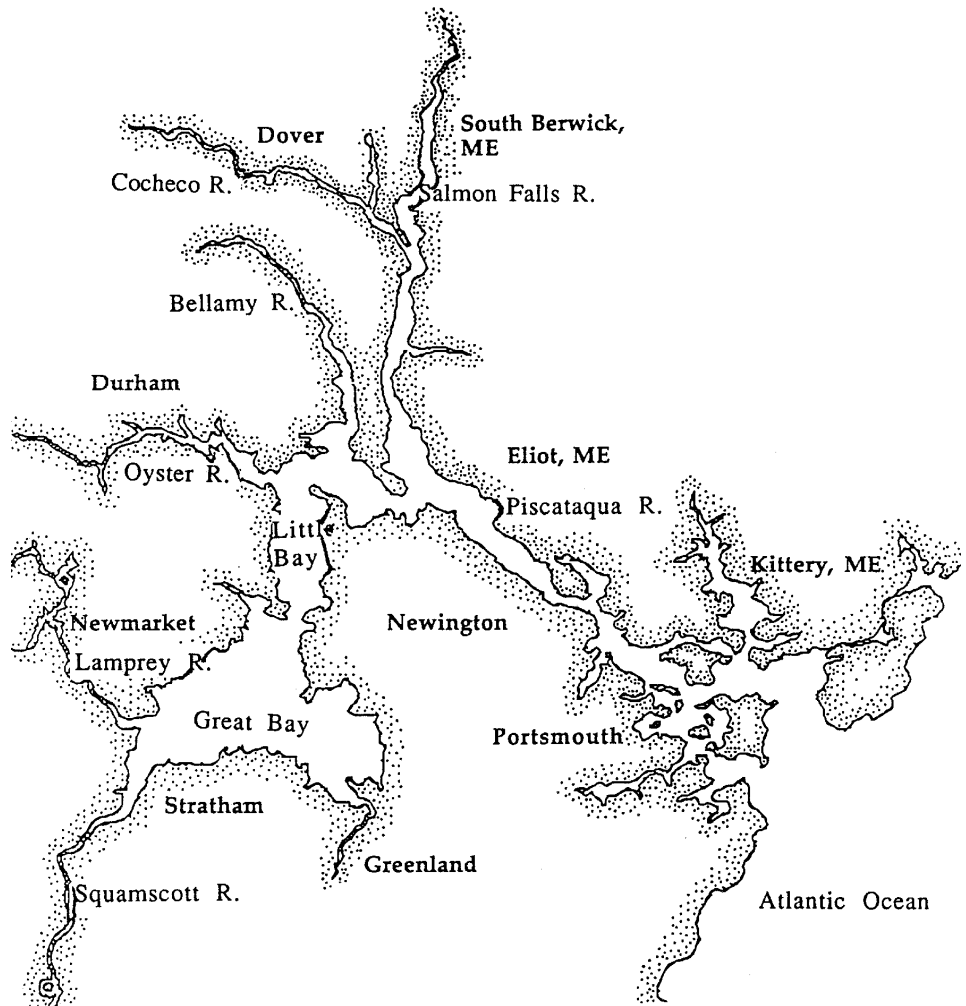
COOPERATIVE,

continued from page 1

variety of scientific and engineering expertise to meet its responsibilities.

The Cooperative consists of Sprague Energy Corporation, Irving Oil Inc., Public Service of New Hampshire, and a mutual aid partner, the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. Also serving as Cooperative associates are the U.S. Coast Guard, the N.H. Department of Environmental Services (DES), the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, and local emergency response agencies.

For more information on the Piscataqua River Cooperative, call (603) 431-5131. Also, for more information on the Piscataqua River/Great Bay estuary, contact Carol Swete, DES Coastal Response Coordinator, at (603) 271-8807.



EXERCISES,

continued from page 1

The focus of this year's exercise included booming strategies around PRC member facility's oil terminal docks, and the use of protective booming at the University of New Hampshire's Jackson Laboratory at Adams Point. An important part of the exercise included the post-exercise evaluation, called "the hot wash." The hot wash is conducted to discuss the successes of the exercises, and the failures or areas that require improvement. This method of evaluation allows the PRC and others involved to continually hone their skills and build expertise with each succeeding deployment.



Boom deployment exercises on Great Bay.

The Responder



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"...TWO IF BY SEA"

Flotilla of Vessels Ready to Respond

Few New Hampshire residents realize that a flotilla of boats, skimmers, barges and catamarans stand at the ready year-round to respond to discharges of oil along the coast. Strategically placed from Hampton Harbor to the Great Bay Marina, the vessels are equipped with communications, navigations hardware, and spill response equipment. Captain Stephen Root III of the Piscataqua River Cooperative (PRC) directs the activities of the PRC's response equipment.

At right, the vessels Piscataqua Responder and Great Bay Responder assisting in a boom deployment exercise. Below, Blaise Heroux, of DES's Initial Response Subsection, regularly captains the Admiral Vose out of Great Bay Marina.



...and if by land?

One of the best ways to protect the many rivers and tributaries feeding into the Great Bay and Little Bay area is through the strategic positioning of storage sheds and trailers loaded with spill response equipment. DES maintains a number of these throughout the coastal region, including the Piscataqua, Hampton Harbor, Pierce's Island, and the Jackson Estuarine Laboratory on Durham Point. The trailers are stocked with various lengths of oil spill boom, anchors, personal protective equipment, lines, and other marine related hardware.



Low draft, flat bottom U.S. Navy Catamaran on loan to the PRC from the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.



JBF Skimmer being cleaned and prepped at the Irving Oil Terminal on Preble Way.

Innovations in the World of Oil Containment Booms

What has a 12" skirt, comes in pumpkin orange, is washable, and floats too?

A) This year's most fashionable personal floatation device.

B) Something once worn by Ginger on *Gilligan's Island*.

C) An oil spill response boom.

Yes, the right answer is C. All booms are not created equal, though. Many types of boom exist, ranging from fireproof to disposable to washable, and Styrofoam to air-filled. Innovation in the industry continues to improve upon this time-honored method of corralling oil slicks. Consider these recent advancements currently being tested in the Great Bay/Piscataqua River area.



The Bay Defender (above and at left). The University of New Hampshire received a grant from the U.S. Coast Guard to design this piece of equipment to contain and recover oil spills in fast currents. Professor Robinson Swift and staff members from UNH's Mechanical Engineering Department devised this prototype oil collection device that works in currents up to two knots, typical conditions for the Piscataqua River. It operates by allowing oil to enter a gap in the forward section and temporarily "corral" the oil until it can be skimmed off the surface with a floating pump. Water escapes through baffles or holes in the bottom of the barrier.

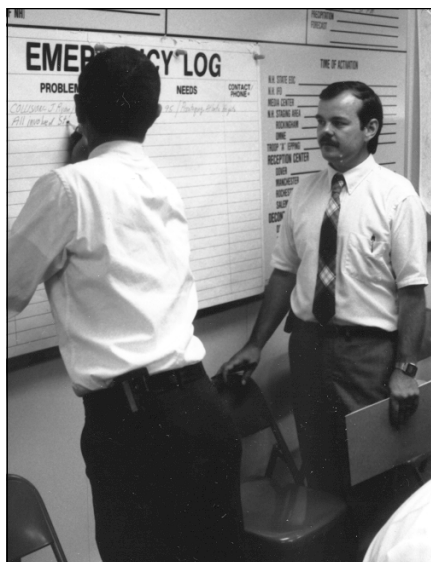


The Boom Deflector (at left). It is always a challenge to keep long sections of boom steady in strong currents. A possible solution is pictured here in the form of boom deflectors, currently under evaluation by the U.S. Coast Guard's Boston Marine Safety Office. A five-foot deflector is inserted at 50' intervals along the boom, and the fins are adjusted to boost buoyancy and stabilize the boom in the current.

Permanent Incident Command Center Established

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) has recently established a permanent Incident Command Center designed to facilitate the needs of the "Unified Command" during oil spill training and drill exercises, and during the event of an oil spill in New Hampshire's coastal waters. The Unified Command consists of decision-makers representing federal, state, and local government agencies, as well as the responsible party. The availability of a well-equipped Incident Command Center greatly enhances communication between operation stakeholders and provides for timely and correct decision-making. The command center is located in the Pease Development Authority building at the Pease International Tradeport, 360 Corporate Drive, Portsmouth.

The Command Center will be the hub of activity during an oil spill event. To accommodate the needs of command personnel, DES procured and installed the necessary communication equipment including telephones, fax machines, black/white and color printers, copy machines,



DES's Rick Berry (at right) participating in a spill response exercise.

audio visual equipment, and a VHF radio base station and radio. A 15-unit Local Area Network with appropriate software, including Arc View and GIS base maps, has also been installed. This system was tested during the spring 2001 spill drill exercise. New furniture has been purchased to add to the comfort of the facility. Future additions will include a color map printer-plotter and wall-size information

boards. The enhanced, state-of-the-art command center will definitely pay dividends in the event of a substantial oil spill in New Hampshire's coastal waters.



The ICC is located in the Pease Development Authority Building in Portsmouth.

A Salute to Commander Roy Nash

After three years as the commanding officer of the U.S. Coast Guard's Marine Safety Office for Maine and New Hampshire, Commander Roy A. Nash will be leaving his post in July of this year. He will be moving to Washington, D.C. to attend the Coast Guard's Senior Service School.

Wearing many hats in his present post, Commander Nash notably played an active role in bolstering the



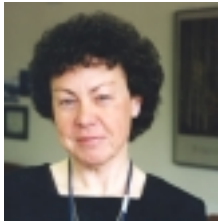
oil spill preparedness of the northern New England coast. Working closely with Piscataqua River cooperative members, includ-

ing Cooperative President James Collins of Sprague Energy and DES Commissioner Robert W. Varney, Cdr. Nash contributed greatly to response planning activities. He was a hands-on leader who was a familiar face at oil spill exercises and forums. Most recently, he and his staff worked jointly with oil terminal personnel, ship captains, and the Marine Safety Field Office in New Castle, N.H. to develop and implement a safe mooring plan. This plan is a preventative measure that assures proper supervision of oil tanker mooring lines to eliminate breakaways from docks.

The New Hampshire and Maine coastal environment has benefited greatly during Cdr. Nash's tenure, and his fellow oil spill responders applaud his contributions and wish him well.

DES Coastal Emergency Response Planner Conducts Preparedness Activities

As part of its on-going emergency response activities, DES created a staff position in May 2000 devoted to assisting with the agency's coastal



oil spill preparedness activities. Carol Swete, was hired to serve in that critical planner's role, within DES's Initial Response

Subsection led by Rick Berry.

Bringing to her post an extensive background in response management, including working both in Massachusetts' solid waste industry and in DES's highly respected water testing laboratory, Carol is a New Hampshire native who brings both enthusiasm and organizational skills to her planning position.

"The coast of New Hampshire is a

very special place," commented Carol, "one rich in aquatic biodiversity and requiring both vigilance and planning efforts to prevent potential oil spill disasters." Carol notes that the Piscataqua River and Great Bay estuary are a particular focus of attention since Portsmouth Harbor is a major port of entry for oil tankers and other vessels. "Since previous significant oil spills, we've come a long way in our ability to respond to emergencies," says Carol. "Nonetheless, we're continually striving to improve our preparedness capabilities."

To reach Carol, please contact her at the DES Concord offices on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at (603) 271-8807, or at DES's Portsmouth Incident Command Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays at (603) 430-6854.

"Train As You Fight"

Responding to coastal oils spills requires that all the players be ready to take action in a moments notice. It's no wonder the emergency responders' credo is "Train As You Fight." Here's a look at some of the numerous training events that DES spill response and industry personnel in the Seacoast area have participated in the recent past:

- Boating Courses
- Annual Area Committee Seminars
- 40-Hour OSHA 1910 Certification Classes
- Annual 8-Hour Refresher Courses
- Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Classes
- Incident Command System Training Course
- Shoreline Damage Assessment Course
- Facility Response Team Training
- Oil Spill Response Courses and Exercises
- Terrorism Response Drills
- Tabletop and Equipment Deployment Exercises



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